Hamilton Field, Hospital
(Facility No. 515)
Hospital Drive
Novato
Marin County
California

HABS No. CA-2398-BB

HABS
CAL
21-NOVA,
1BB-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

HABS
CAL
21-NOVA,
1BB-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HAMILTON FIELD
Hospital
(Facility No. 515)

HABS No. CA-239B-BB

Location: Hamilton Army Air Field
Novato, Marin County, California
Hospital
Facility No. 515 (Hospital Drive)

U.S.G.S.: Novato, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1954 (revised 1980)
Petaluma Point, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1959 (revised 1980)
UTM Coordinates: Zone 10; A: 542100/4213620; B: 544720/4212220;
C: 542760/4210650; D: 541040/4212600

Present Owner: U. S. Army, Washington, D.C.

Present Occupant: Military

Present Use: Military personnel offices/vacant

Statement of Significance:

The building is significant as an example of the application of an important architectural trend (Spanish Colonial Revival) adapted to reflect California's mission heritage in a dramatic departure from traditional military architecture. The central importance of the base hospital is evident from the level of architectural attention it received and also from the central position it has in the base configuration.

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) for a comprehensive Statement of Significance and individual report HABS No. CA-2398-F for a condensed general Statement of Significance.

PART 1: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: Construction on the base hospital was completed on November 16, 1934 (Hamilton Facility Cards 1933-1971).

2. Architect: Hamilton Field was designed under the guidance of Captain Howard B. Nurse, Construction Quartermaster. He was assisted by a corps of civilians headed by H. P. Spencer, Chief Architect, and F. W. Salfinger, Chief Engineer. Captain F. C. Petes and Lieutenant J. H. Veal of the Quartermaster's Corps were detailed to Marin County by the War Department to assist Nurse (*Novato Advance* May 28, 1932). Landscaping efforts were directed by C. C. Stevens, a local landscape engineer, using plantings chosen by Nurse and donated by Marin County citizens.

3. Original Owner: Hamilton Field is on land originally owned by private individuals and companies. In 1930, the California Packing Company sold 630 acres of land to Marin County to use to entice the Army to build on the site. An additional 161 acres were purchased from Dr. T. Peter and Julia Bodkin. These parcels were combined with other County-owned land, and in 1932 Marin County sold a 927-acre parcel of land to the Department of the Army for $1.00 for use by the Army Air Corps as an air field. In 1947 Hamilton Air Field was transferred to the newly-formed U. S. Air Force and renamed Hamilton Air Force Base. In 1974 the U. S. Congress declared the installation excess to militery needs and closed the base (Maniery et al. 1993). The hospital was retained by the U. S. Army until 1994, when operations were closed. It is in the process of being sold.

4. Builder, Contractor, Supplier: Leo Epp of San Francisco was awarded a contract to build the hospital on November 30, 1933, for a bid of $109,377. Actual construction cost was $108,887.80.

5. Original Plans and Construction: Original plans for the hospital and other buildings constructed during the 1930s were drawn on linen with black ink by Nurse's corps of architects. The originals have not been located but copies of the floor plans, and plans for later modification to the hospital, are filed in the National Archives, Pacific Division, San Bruno, CA. Facility cards for the hospital, including original photographs taken at completion of construction and floor plans, and other historical photographs depicting the hospital are on file at the Hamilton Room, Novato History Museum, Novato.

6. Alterations/Additions: Addition on the southeast corner (post 1951). Front entry doors are modern glass and metal. Wooden sash windows on front of building have been replaced with aluminum. Exterior modifications include replacement or original window sashes with metal sashes, removal of the entry doors and replacement with modern glass and metal doors, and installation of aluminum-framed windows on the front facade. The rear wing on the southeast corner of the building was added after 1951. During World War II a covered, wooden walkway extended south from the second story balcony to temporary housing located on the hilltop across North Oakwood Street. This walkway has been removed, but its outline is visible in the hospital area. Significant interior modifications include addition of partitions and rearrangement of interior space to create offices, installation of suspended ceilings and acoustical tile, carpeting of main corridors, and removal of most original furnishings.

B. Historical Context:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HABS No. CA-2398-F.

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The hospital area at Hamilton Field was planned around the existing topography to complement the architectural style chosen for the base. Nurse and his team of architects designed reinforced concrete buildings covered with white stucco and red tile roofs and other features such as arcades and ornamental door surrounds in a basic Spanish Colonial Revival style. This style was used by Captain Nurse at Randolph Field in Texas and by other Army architects at various bases (Fine and Remington 1972:48; Thomason and Associates 1993). Captain Nurse blended the standard Colonial Revival design with elements borrowed from Moorish, Spanish Churriguerresque, Mission, and Art Moderne styles, creating a unique Spanish Eclectic look.

The primary method of construction for the administrative and industrial buildings was reinforced concrete covered with stucco exteriors and Mission tile roofs. Foundations of all buildings were constructed of reinforced concrete, in consideration of the seismic activity in the region. More important buildings on base, including the hospital, exhibit ornate facades and design elements reflecting building function, such as the caduceus in the brackets supporting the hospital portico.

2. Condition of fabric: The general condition is good with few exterior alterations and some interior alterations. Many of the original finishes and fixtures remain.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Building 515 has a rectilinear front mass with a rear rectilinear wing connectad by an enclosed corridor. The front elevation features a projecting central pavilion and ornate portico. The dimensions of the front portion are 111 feet-4 inches by 38 feet-6 inches and the rear portion are 70 feet by 36 feet-6 inches. The building is two stories tall and has a below grade basement.

2. Foundation: The foundation is reinforced concrete measuring 14 inches thick. It is reinforced with ½-inch steel bars.

3. Walls: The walls are constructed of 12-inch-wide poured-in-place concrete coated with cementitious stucco rendered with a smooth face. Exterior detailing consists of a projecting band course at the base and cornice level. A cross-gable, framed by two circular pilasters with cast concrete steeple caps, features a pendentive bracketed cornice and a central gable vent with four openings. The lintels over the upper story balconies ara scalloped. The upper floor arched window openings feature ceramic tile infills. Inset stucco panels with brackats are located under the rear window sills.

4. Structural systems, framing: Structural support is provided by reinforced concrete columns and a girder system with concrete slab flooring spanning between concrete joists. Infill material is poured-in-place reinforced concrete. The roof system consists of terra cotta Mission tile laid on wood rafters for the front portion and a flat truss system for the rear wing.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The primary entrance is accessed through an arched portico. The corners of the portico consist of cast concrete Corinthian columns topped with modillions set on end against a stucco-covered cast concrete parapet. The arches feature Moorish-style decorative details including cast concrete lattice supported by brackets with cast concrete caduceus decorative motifs. Second story balconies are located on both the primary and side facades. The balconies consist of projecting concrete slabs supported by concrete brackets enclosed by a decorative wrought iron balustrade. At the rear is a wooden porch used for emergency egress. This porch used to be part of a covered wood walkway that extended across the street to medical staff barracks.

6. Chimneys: Building 515 has one stucco-clad brick chimney, square in plan and capped by a chamfered stucco-over-brick hood, located on the exterior of the raar elevation.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways/doors: Primary entrance doors are located on the first floor in the center of the north facade; secondary doors are at the rear elevation of both the front and back wing. The primary entrance is through a double metal frame door with glass panels; above the doorway is a glass transom. Secondary doors are sets of double solid-core wood frames with four lights in each door; hardware is metal panic bars. Second floor balconies are accessed by double metal frame doors with 12 lights; a five-light transom is overhead.

b. Windows/shutters: Most windows have been replaced with a metal frame four-light casement window with a four-light transom. The original multi-pane casement with fan window can still be seen at the rear of the front wing.

8. Roof:

a. Shape/covering: The front wing has a hipped roof with cross gable at the center covered with terra cotta Mission tile. The rear wing has a flat bituminous built-up roofing system.

b. Cornice/eaves: The cornice consists of a horizontal band of flat finish stucco surrounding the front wing. An elaborated cornice with pendentive bracketing occurs at the cross gable. There is no cornice on the rear wing. The gutter system consists of copper troughs leading to metal downspouts with decorative scuppers. Cast concrete splash blocks are located at the bottoms of the downspouts.

c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: One shed roof with Mission tile and stucco finish is located on the east elevation. A small elevator penthouse with stucco finish and flat roof is located at the rear wing.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

a. Basement: When in operation as a hospital, the basement floor consisted of a double-loaded corridor with rooms for a detention ward, a disturbed patient room, pharmacy, prophylaxis, sick call, a medical storeroom, transformer room, two toilets, four general storerooms, a patient effects room, a property office, an attendant's room, a morgue, a boiler room, and an ambulance ramp and parking area. Two furnace rooms, a shower room, latrine, and storage space was also located in the basement in 1974. Other rooms had been converted to offices after 1974.

b. First Floor: The main entrance foyar leads to a central hallway in the front wing. This double-loaded corridor is flanked by offices on each side. The west end of tha corridor terminates into an open office space with three privata offices on the extreme west end. A central corridor connects the front and rear wings and also providas access to the two interior staircases. The rear wing consists of a large central conference room with classrooms and offices in the east and west end of the rear first floor. When in operation as a hospital, offices off the corridor included two dontal oporating rooms and a dental lab, an examination room, offices of the flight surgeon, surgeon and sergeant offices for eye, ear, nose, and throat medical practice, a toilet, porch, and a werd. Down the hall was the mess room, kitchen, and day room with an adjoining porch.

c. Second Floor: The front wing has a central double-loaded corridor flanked by offices which were formerly patients' rooms, bathrooms, operating theaters, and a surgical scrub erea. There is a staircase connecting the two floors of the front wing. The rear wing contains a central hall with two cross hallways that provide access to office space. This area formerly contained a dormitory, two non-commissioned officers' rooms and a bathroom.

d. Attic: The attic, which is accessible by ladder from the second floor, is unfinished. The roof framing is constructed with two- by twelve-inch rafters. The attic flooring is a concrete pad which supports HVAC equipment and ducts, later additions to the building.

2. Stairways: The primary stair, located in the front wing, is concrete with a linoleum veneer. The treads are green and the risers black. There is a wall-mounted round wood banister attached to one sida and a wood banister mounted on an iron pile balustrada on tha opposite side that runs continuously from tha sacond floor to the basemant. The secondary staircase, located in the rear wing, is concrete with similar balustrade design.

3. Flooring: The subflooring for the entire building is six-inch thick concrete slab. The corridors and offices originally had linoleum flooring but are now covered with carpet, excapt for the east end of the second floor which is eight-inch-squara brown linoleum. The first floor of the rear wing is covered with eight-inch-square red and gray linoleum tile. The kitchen is finished with a terra cotta 12-inch-square red quarry tile floor. The latrines have random black and white ceramic, one- by one-inch and one- by two-inch, tile floors. All bathrooms have marble thresholds.

4. Wall/ceiling finish: Tha entrence hall, corridors, and stair wells on each of the three levals hava four-inch-square yellow ceramic tile wainscoting with plaster above the wainscoting. Bathrooms are finished in a similar pattern using white tile with the addition of a black bullnose course at the top of the wainscoting. Offices are finished

in plaster but a few have pink and black ceramic tiles. The operating theaters are finished in four-inch-square green ceramic tile from floor to ceiling. The basament of the raar wing is unfinished twelve-inch-squara terra cotta block. Ceilings are plaster except for tha rear wing which has a dropped acoustical tile ceiling, added after 1951.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways/doors: Each office is accessed by a single solid-core wood door with glass transom. Basement doors are wood frame with a singla frosted-glass pane. Emergency egress is provided by a set of double solid-core wood frame doors with four glass lights.

b. Windows: A skylight is present in one room on the second floor. Transom windows are locatad over interior doors to provide light to hallways.

6. Decorative features/trim: No significant interior decorative trim was noted.

7. Hardware: Door hardware is polished chrome knob with surround and consists of a standard circular knob with half mortise door hinge. Fire doors are operated by brass-finish panic bars. Anti-static light switches are present in the operating theaters.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: Steam radiators, primarily made by American Radiator Company, are located in each office. Steam is generated by a boiler located in the basement; the boiler is a Kewanee-Scottie Junior.

b. Kitchen Appliances: A walk-in refrigerator manufactured by North Bay Electric is all that remains of the kitchen facilities, which originally included a "Wedgewood #561" cooking range, and "Crescent Model KM" dishwasher.

c. Ventilation: New mechanical ventilation was observad in the attic and serves the second floor. Ducts lead to vents in each room.

d. Lighting: Both offices and corridors are lighted by suspended double tube florescent fixtures; power to the fixtures is provided by exposed conduit. These fixtures are not original to the building. The latrines and the rear basement have the original "schoolhouse" type fixtures with milk glass globes suspended from porcelain canopies.

e. Plumbing: Each floor contains one male and one female latrine with additional bathrooms in the basement. Latrines contain porcelain sinks by Trenton

Pottery Company, and flush valve toilets and urinals by Crane. Marble shower stalls with original hardware are still present. The original towel racks, soap dishes, and mirrors are extant. Offices and clinics on the first floor are outfitted with cast iron and ceramic sinks. Sinks in the operating rooms have been removed, but pipes are still present in the walls.

9. Original Furnishings: Stainless steel cabinets with a non-porous surface and a lab sink remain in the basement laboratory. Stainless steel cabinets and counters are also found in the second floor laboratory adjacent to the surgical theaters. A dumbwaiter, which connected the second floor with the kitchen, has been blocked up.

D. Site:

1. General site orientation: The primary facade of the Hamilton Field Hospital faces northeast. Located in the original Spanish Colonial Revival district of Hamilton Army Air Field on a rolling hill, this building is surrounded by World War II temporary frame structures. A parking lot is located adjacent to the front facade.

2. Historic landscape design: Captain Nurse's overall plan for base design included thoughtful use of rock walls, terracing, and plantings to create a visual effect that was continued, in a more limited fashion, during World War II. Rock terracing throughout the original base served to visually unite various sections of the base into an overall city-like plan. They were built as part of the final phase of original post construction in 1935 (Hamilton Official Photographs 1934-1935). Foundation and accent plantings, tree-lined streets, and retention of natural oak groves and rolling hills complement the rock work.

The hospital has a large grouping of foundation plants used to ease the transition between the ground and the building. These include Japanese boxwoods, California privet, myrtle, little-leafed myrtle, mock orange, laurel cherry, red clusterberry, and shiny-leaf privet. The original plantings appear to have been supplemented at a later date with oleander, mock orange, giant reed grass, and Chinese spirea. The corners of the building are accented with incense cedar, while the entrance if framed by English yew. A walkway toward the northwest originally contained a fountain and is framed by stone terraced planting beds (now abandoned). This area is surrounded by overgrown shiny-leaf privet (originally intended as a foundation plantings) and a large Canary Island date palm.

Captain Nurse's overall plan for base design include thoughtful use of rock walls, terracing, and plantings to create a visual effect that was continued, in a more limited fashion, during World War II. Rock terracing throughout the original base served to simultanaously separate individual residences while visually uniting various sections of the base into an overall city-like plan. They were built as part of the final phase of original post construction in 1935 (Hamilton Official Photographs 1934-1935).

Foundation and accent plantings, tree-lined streets, and retention of natural oak groves and rolling hills complement the rock work.

The primary facade is approached via a drive that circumscribes a terraced grass knoll. The knoll features a series of random rubble retaining walls and a set of stone steps which onca led to a circular stone fountain and a much larger lawn area, which have been removed in order to enlarge the parking lot. Originally, the rock terraces formed the shape of the nose of an airplane, fitting for this base. These features are part of an overall landscape scheme that continues on the west side of the building with a random rubble walkway that leads to a stone amphitheater constructed in a natural ravine.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398). Copies of the plans for the hospital are filed at the National Archives, Pacific Division, San Bruno, CA. and the Hamilton Room, Novato History Museum, Novato.

B. Historic Maps and Views:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398).

C. Interviews:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398).

D. Bibliography:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398).

Sources cited in this individual report are listed below.

Fine, Jesse, and Lenore Remington
1972 *Army Corps of Engineers: Construction in the U.S.* U.S. Army and World War II, Office of Military History.

Hamilton Facility Cards
1933-1971 Maintenance Cards for Base Facilities. On file, Hamilton Army Air Field Installation Office, Novato, and Hamilton Room, Novato History Museum, Novato.

Maniery, Mary L., Leslie R. Fryman, and Fred Hrusa
1993 *National Register of Historic Places Evaluation, Hamilton Army Air Field Historic District, Marin County, California*. Submitted to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District.

Thomason and Associates
1993 *Randolph Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas*. Cultural Resource Survey, Final Report. Nashville, Tennessee. On file, State Office of Historic Preservation, Austin, Texas.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-239B).

F. Supplemental Material:

Copies of representative floor plans of Facility No. 515, dated in the 1930s and prepared by the Quartermaster's General Office are attached to this form. Line drawings of floor plans were drafted on site in 1994 by Keith Syda, scanned into a computer and drawn by Christopher MacDonald in 1995 and corrected and finalized by Claire Warshaw in 1996 (all PAR Environmental Services, Inc. staff).

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

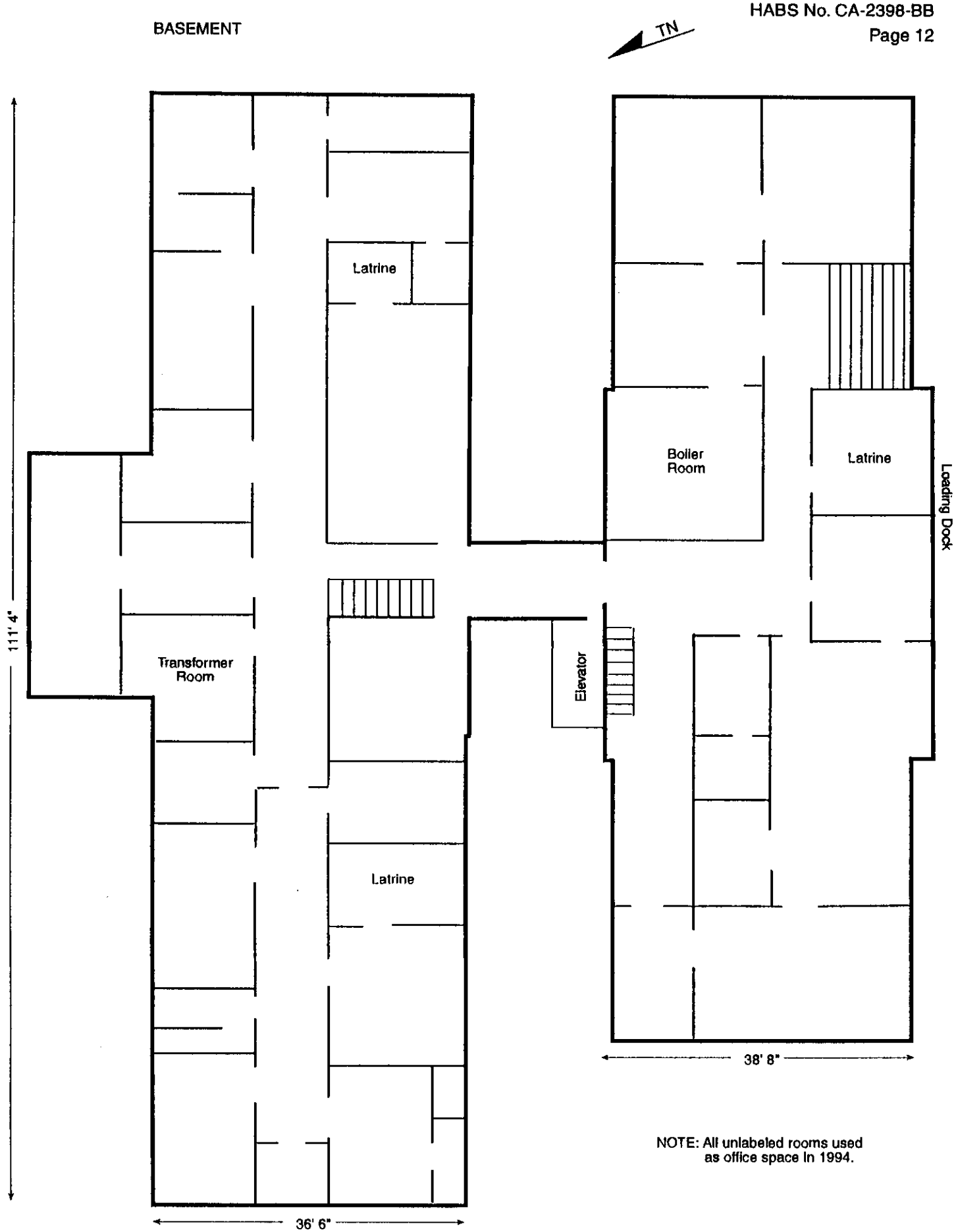
Hamilton Army Air Field is owned by various federal entities including the Department of the Navy, Department of the Army, United States Coast Guard, and General Services Administration. The Army/GSA parcels are being excessed and sold to private developers. The Navy property is included in Base Closure and Realignment actions.

As part of the Army's undertaking, it has been determined in consultation with the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) that the excess sale will have an affect on properties at the air field, and that these properties are components of a district that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Based on consultation with the OHP and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, pursuant to 36 CFR part 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was entered into by the interested parties in March 1994. The agreement stipulated that prior to excess sale the Army must contact the HABS/HAER

division at the Western Regional Office of the National Park Service, San Francisco, California, to determine the appropriate level and kind of recordation for the subject properties. The MOA further stipulated that copies of the documentation be made available to the OHP and appropriate local archives designated by the OHP. This recordation has been prepared in order to meet those stipulations.

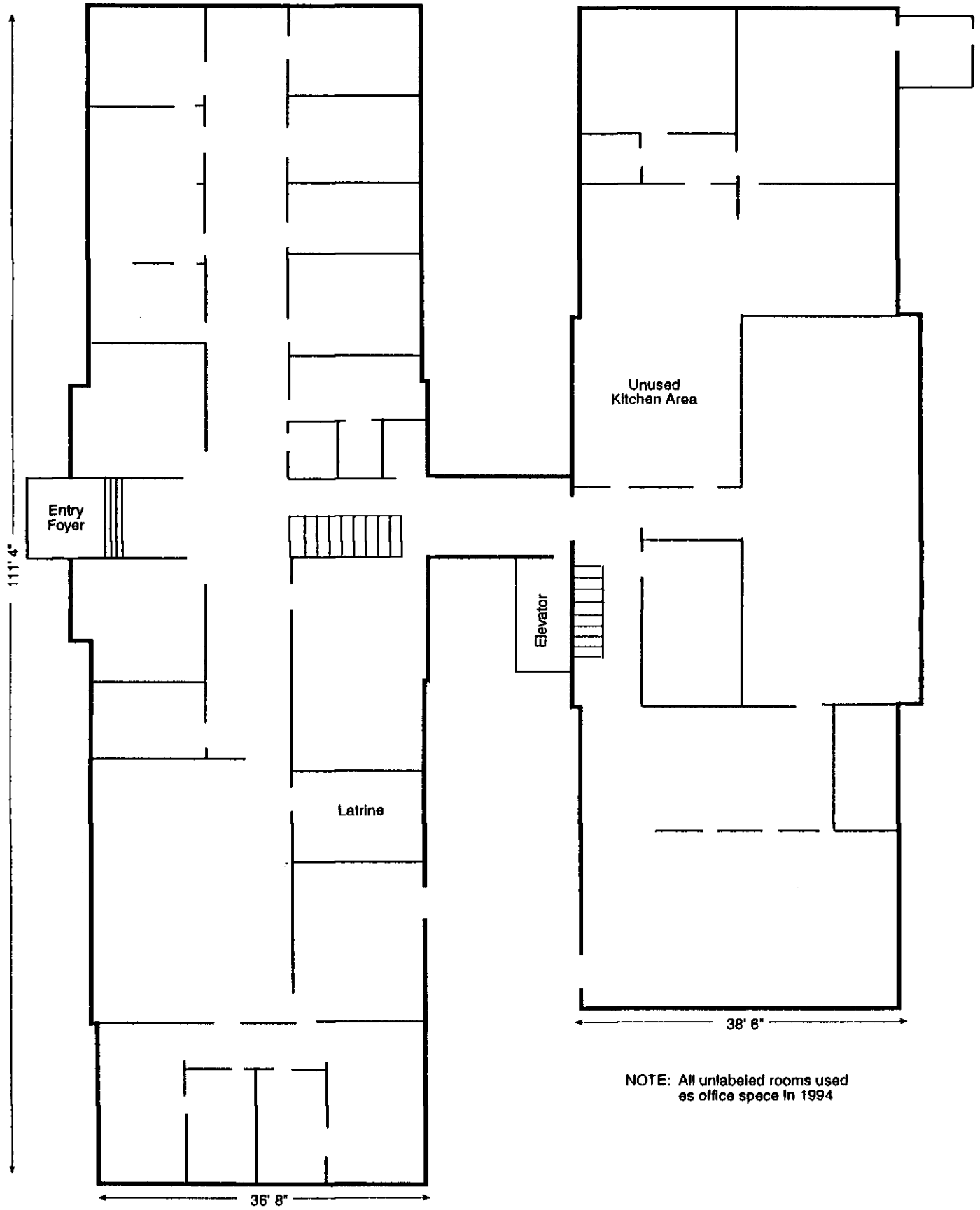
The title page, Part I, and Part III were prepared by Mary L. Maniery, Historian, PAR Environmental Services, Sacramento. Architectural descriptions in Part II were compiled by Judith Marvin, Historian/Architectural Historian, Foothill Resources, Murphys, California. Descriptions were checked against photographs and plans by Mary L. Maniery and were embellished and corrected, as necessary. Information on historic landscape design was extracted by Mary L. Maniery from a report prepared by Dr. Fred Hrusa, Botanist, PAR Environmental Services. Photography was prepared by David DeVries, Mesa Technical, Berkeley, California.

BASEMENT



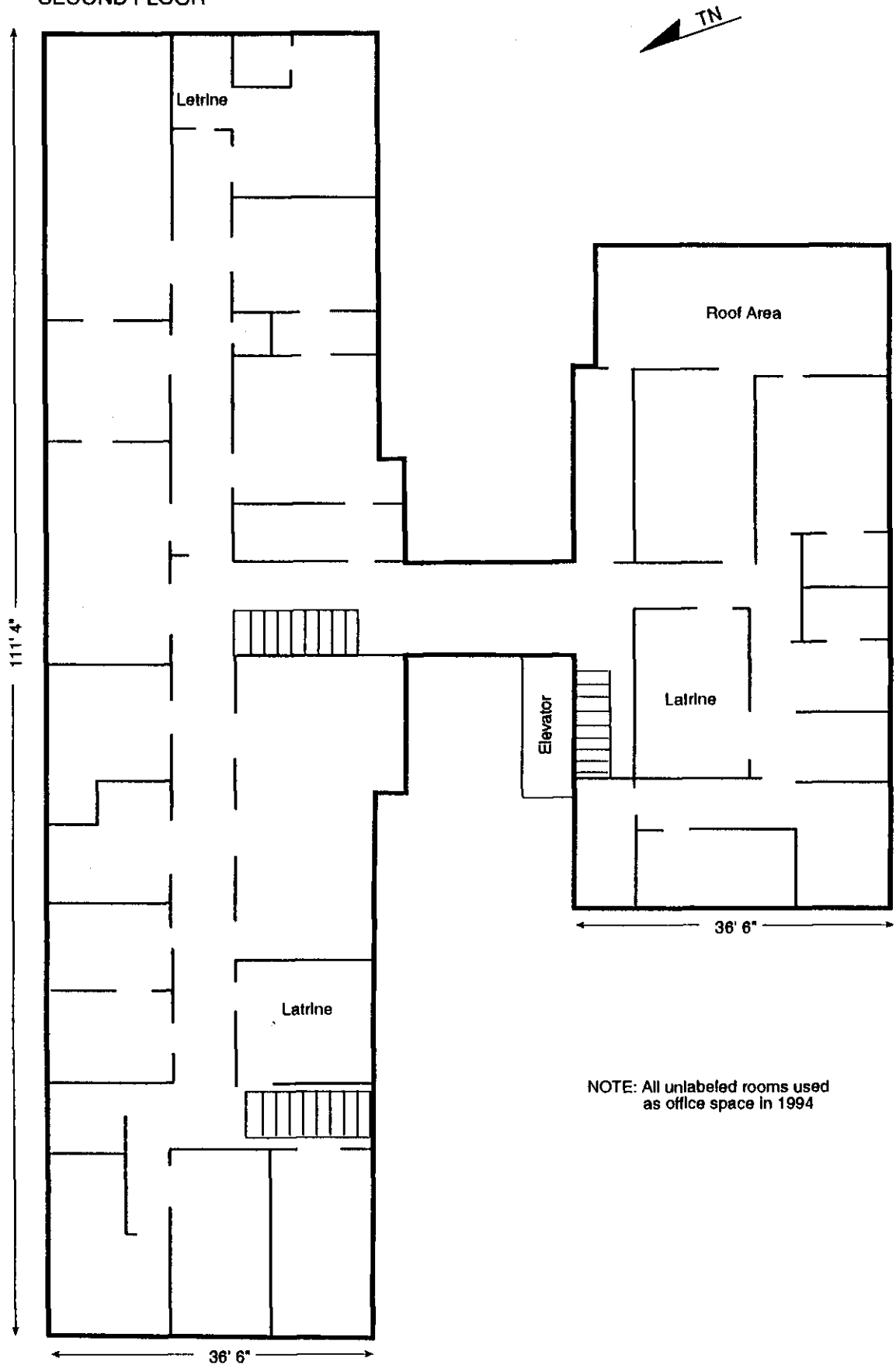
NOTE: All unlabeled rooms used as office space in 1994.

FIRST FLOOR

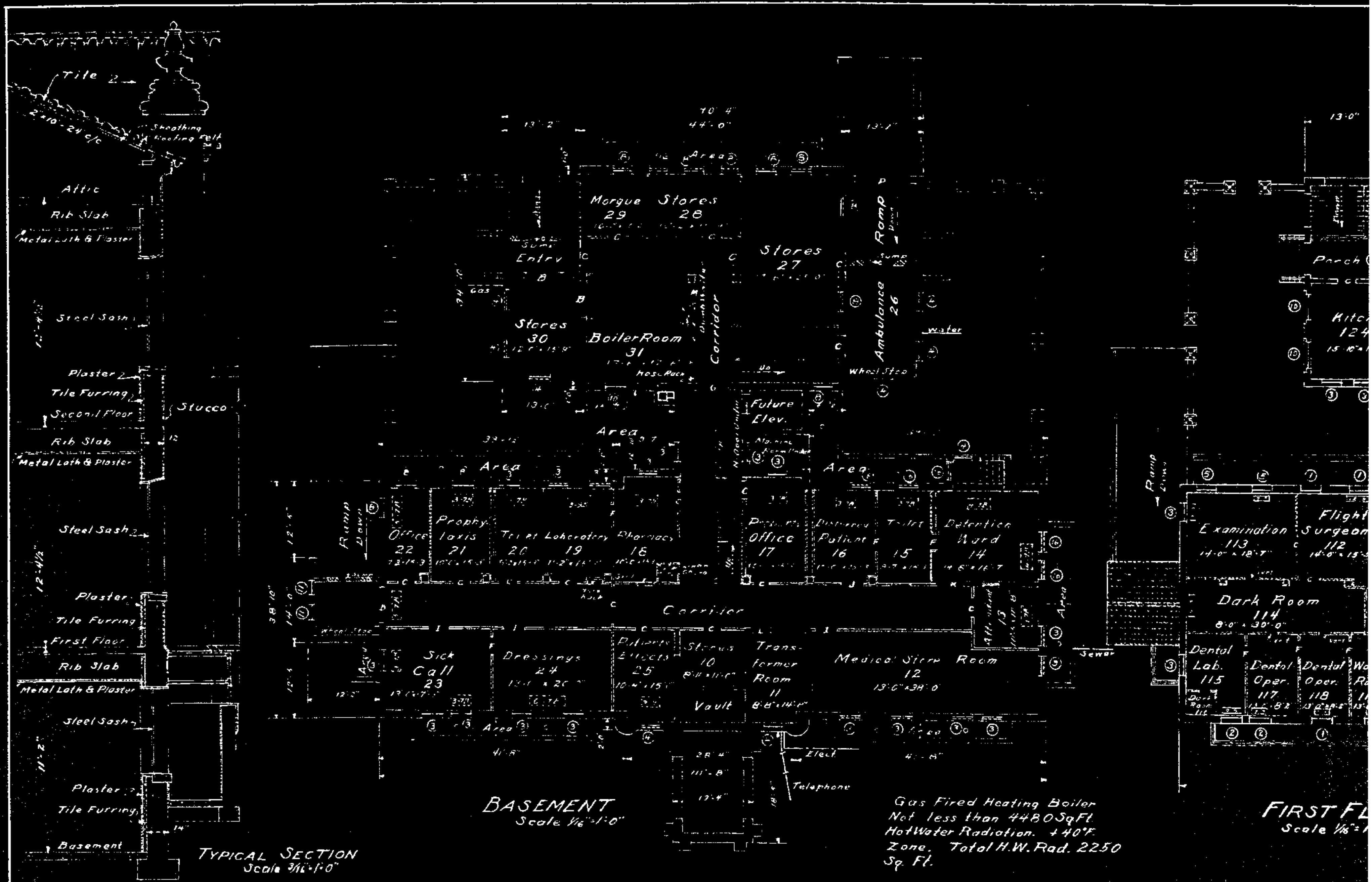


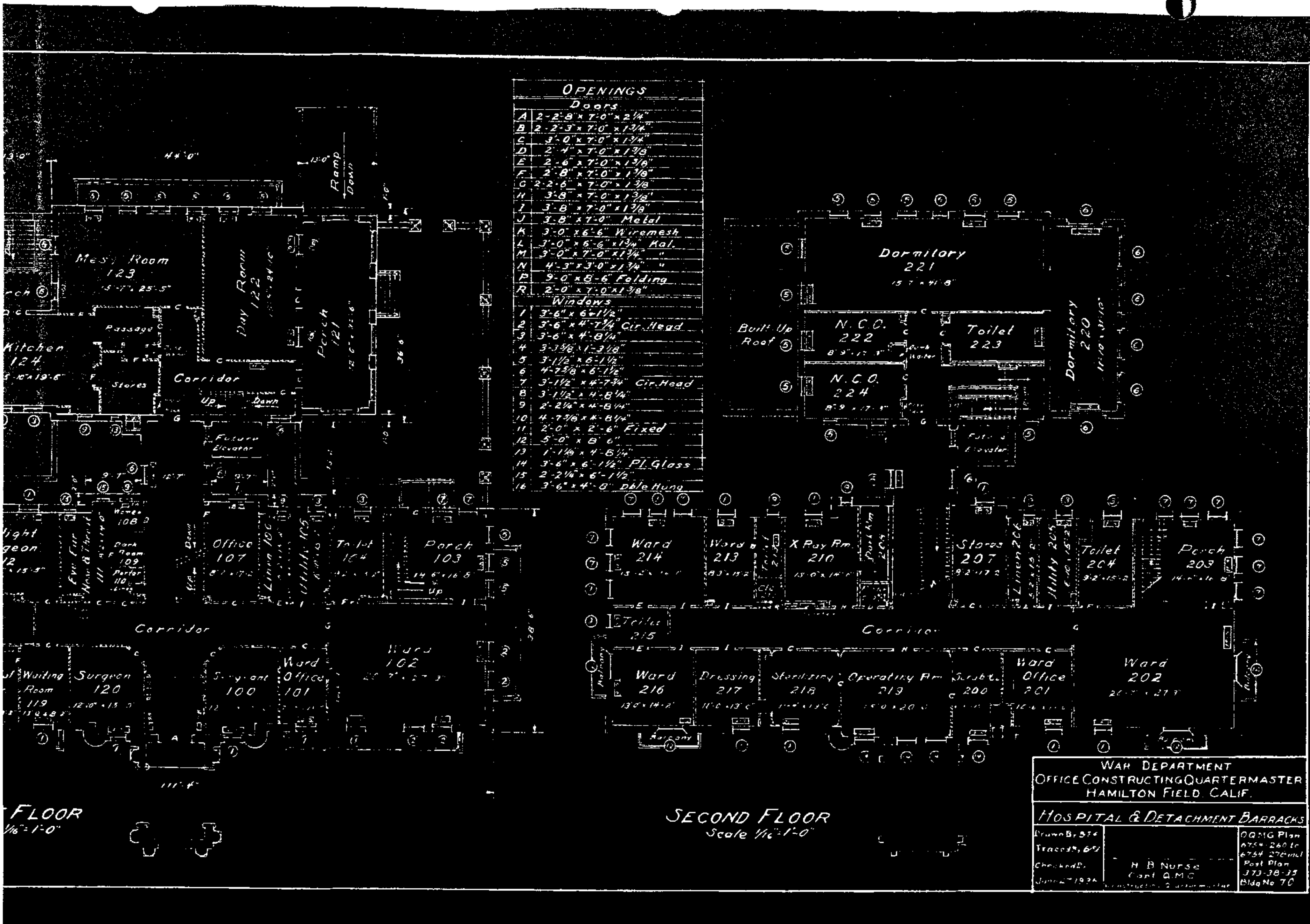
NOTE: All unlabeled rooms used as office space in 1994

SECOND FLOOR



NOTE: All unlabeled rooms used as office space in 1994


Tile 2
Sheathing
Roofing Felt
Attic
Rib Slab
Metal Lath & Plaster
Steel Sash
Plaster
Tile Furring
Second Floor
Rib Slab
Metal Lath & Plaster
Stucco
Steel Sash
Plaster
Tile Furring
First Floor
Rib Slab
Metal Lath & Plaster
Steel Sash
Plaster
Tile Furring
Basement
TYPICAL SECTION
Scale 3/16"=1'-0"
Morgue 29
Stores 28
Entry 8
Stores 27
Ramp Down
Stores 30
Boiler Room 31
Corridor
Ambulance 26
Future Elev.
Area
Ramp Down
Office 22
Prophy-laxis 21
Toilet Laboratory 20 19
Pharmacy 16
Office 17
Patient 16
Toilet 15
Detention Ward 14
Corridor
Attendant 13
Sick Call 23
Dressings 24
Patients' Effects 25
Stores 10
Vault
Trans-former Room 11
Medical Store Room 12
Elect.
Telephone
Sewer
BASEMENT
Scale 1/16"=1'-0"
Gas Fired Heating Boiler
Not less than 4480 Sq. Ft.
Hot Water Radiation. +40°F.
Zone. Total H.W. Rad. 2250 Sq. Ft.
Ramp Down
Examination 113
Flight Surgeon 112
Dark Room 114
Dental Lab. 115
Dental Oper. 117
Dental Oper. 118
Porch
Kitc[hen] 124
FIRST FL[OOR]
Scale 1/16"=1'-0"


OPENINGS
Doors
A 2-2-8" x 7-0" x 2 1/4"
B 2-2-3" x 7-0" x 1 3/4"
C 3-0" x 7-0" x 1 3/4"
D 2-4" x 7-0" x 1 3/8"
E 2-6" x 7-0" x 1 3/8"
F 2-8" x 7-0" x 1 3/8"
G 2-2-6" x 7-0" x 1 3/8"
H 3-8" x 7-0" x 1 3/8"
I 3-8" x 7-0" x 1 3/8"
J 3-8" x 7-0" Metal
K 3-0" x 6-6" Wiremesh
L 3-0" x 6-6" x 1 3/4" Kal.
M 3-0" x 7-0" x 1 3/4"
N 4-3" x 3-0" x 1 3/4"
P 9-0" x 8-6" Folding
R 2-0" x 7-0" x 1 3/8"
Windows
1 3-6" x 6-1 1/2"
2 3-6" x 4-7 3/4" Cir. Head
3 3-6" x 4-8 1/4"
4 3-3 5/8" x 1-3 1/8"
5 3-1 1/2" x 6-1 1/2"
6 4-7 5/8" x 6-1 1/2"
7 3-1 1/2" x 4-7 3/4" Cir. Head
8 3-1 1/2" x 4-8 1/4"
9 2-2 1/4" x 4-8 1/4"
10 4-7 7/8" x 4-8 1/4"
11 2-0" x 2-6" Fixed
12 5-0" x 8-6"
13 1-1 1/8" x 4-8 1/4"
14 3-6" x 6-1 1/2" Pl. Glass
15 2-2 1/4" x 6-1 1/2"
16 3-6" x 4-8" Dble Hung
Mess Room 123
Day Room 122
Porch 121
Kitchen 124
Passage
Stores
Corridor
Up
Down
Ramp
Future Elevator
Office 107
Linen 106
Utility 105
Toilet 104
Porch 103
Ward 102
Ward Office 101
Surgeon 100
Surgeon 120
Waiting Room 119
Corridor
FLOOR
Dormitory 221
Dormitory 220
N.C.O. 222
N.C.O. 224
Toilet 223
Built Up Roof
Ward 214
Ward 213
X Ray Rm 210
Dark Rm 209
Stores 207
Linen 206
Utility 205
Toilet 204
Porch 203
Toilet 215
Corridor
Ward 216
Dressing 217
Sterilizing 218
Operating Rm 219
Scrub 200
Ward Office 201
Ward 202
Balcony
SECOND FLOOR
Scale 1/16" = 1'-0"
WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE CONSTRUCTING QUARTERMASTER
HAMILTON FIELD, CALIF.
HOSPITAL & DETACHMENT BARRACKS
H. B. Nurse
Capt. Q.M.C.
Post Plan 373-38-35
Bldg No. 70